2/21/71

Dear Paul,

Thanks for the Epstein piece, which came yesterday.

There was a truly remarkable coincidence after our Friday's conversation on this. I left a little earlier than usual to bring Lil home so I could stop off at the hospital to spend a few minutes with her uncle, who is ill. As soon as I turned the motor on, because I keep the car radio tuned to WTOP for news, there were Cronkite's dulcet tones interpreting this precisely as I told you it would be taken, not as it superficially seems designed to be interpreted. He reached immeasureably more people than the Post's editorial, which will, I predict, be used the same way. Here he was telling the whole country that this dedicated scholar, to whom we are all so indebted, had made his own detailed and impartial study and what it proves is that there is no campaign of any kind against any blacks, least of all militant blacks. His emphasis was <u>not</u> that the figure Garry gave is exaggerated, but that there is no police repression of any kind, and thank Epstein for doing what the press should have done for itself, doing his own investigation, and by God! here is the proof.

This whole thing is entirely unlike the clear intent of that well-intentioned Post editorial. It is true that working against close deadlines, the papers are always confronted with such problems, and people being humans, the kind of error for which it atones is inevitable. It is because I was and am convinced that the purposes and uses of the Epstein piece are not good or healing that I am also convinced that this editorial, for example, will be twisted to the same ends.

Last night I read about half of the piece. I intend to finish it today and if I can find time, write a memo on it, for you and for my own files. I happen to fear the country is going to burn, and that such things add fuel and inspiration. But I write this in advance, having gotten up early to do it, complete reading the piece, and make these notes, because I want to propose a simple intellectual exercise to you on it.

Let me give you a context for it. Assume, as I do, that the decent elements of the press have over-reacted to Agnew and instead of fulfilling their function of birddogging the government on such things are doing it to themselves, and on the wrong issues. So, instead of doing your own commendable agonizing, for each reporter with honest intent faces this same agony that every editor, every paper, faces, reread this piece critically. Try to look for what may be wrong with it, analyze its approach and emphasis, read its self-representation with care, as you would if you were taking it apart. Don't begin with the sympathy your underlining indicates. Even though I read it toofast, because I also have time pressures, I encourage you not to. You did small bits of confabulating. For minor example, you said that Garry gave Epstein his list. The error is quite minor and reflects no worse than a sympathy for the article that indicates a non-critical reading. The list came from Garry's office. It is, in fact, in response to a request to Garry for it. But Garry did not personally send it to Epsetin. I think if you subject this to the kind of treatment my work gets, you'll be asking youself some questions you did not pose to me. So that you can do this independently, I'll enclose my memo separately so that you can avoid being influenced in advance if you do this. And so that you can see that my own analysis is not new, when next you are here you can see how I have and have had my own clippings and other material on this subject files. One other thing: There is a military project called "Project King Alfred". Another writer's file on it was mailed to me but never got here. Be alert to it, for it is secret. I know a man to whom it was shown and two with whom he discussed it. It seems quite relevant.

Sincerely,